

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM
TOM DAVIS, CHAIRMAN



NEWS RELEASE

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Government Reform Committee Unanimously
Approves Key Ethics Reform Legislation

*Dreier Lobbying Bill and Davis-Waxman Executive
Branch Reform Act Clear Committee Easily*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Government Reform Committee Chairman Tom Davis (R-VA) is pleased to announce the Committee today unanimously approved two important pieces of ethics reform legislation, one applying to Members of Congress, their staffs, and top political appointees, the other applying to a broader class of executive branch employees.

The Committee's piece of H.R. 4975, "The Lobbying Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006," covers forfeiture of retirement benefits. The bill, as amended by Chairman Davis and approved today by a unanimous voice vote, would deny federal retirement benefits to any Member, congressional employee, or political appointee convicted of certain crimes that involves violating the trust of public office and are punishable by at least a year in prison.

In addition, the Committee approved by a 32 to 0 vote legislation introduced today by Davis and Ranking Member Henry A. Waxman (D-CA) to provide more transparency to the operations of the executive branch.

H.R. 5112, "The Executive Branch Reform Act of 2006," would:

- require increased disclosure by executive branch officials of any significant contacts between the official and private parties relating to official government action, and require the Office of Government Ethics to maintain a publicly accessible database of this information;
- require high-ranking executive branch officials to get a waiver before interacting with an organization with whom the official is pursuing prospective employment;

- extend to two years the current one-year restriction against former procurement officials accepting compensation from federal contractors with whom they worked as a federal employee;
- prohibit the use of federal funds on propaganda within the United States that is not authorized by law; and
- require the full disclosure of government sponsorship of communications.

“This is ethics reform with teeth,” Davis said. “Our bipartisan proposals will help renew public trust in our government and restore transparency to the way Members of Congress, congressional staff, political appointees and other key executive branch employees interact with lobbyists, potential employers and others.”

Davis said he is hopeful the Rules Committee and House leadership will move H.R. 5112 along with H.R. 4975, which is a broad package of ethics reform legislation introduced by Rules Committee Chairman David Dreier.

“These serious reforms should be given full consideration,” Davis said. “If it is not, we will push for our provisions to be included at the Rules Committee or on the House floor, if necessary.”

The Committee’s provisions in H.R. 4975, as adopted today, would cover such crimes as bribery of public officials and witnesses, illegally seeking outside compensation, illegally seeking outside compensation, government officers and employees acting as agents of foreign principals, conspiracy to commit offense or to defraud United States, embezzlement, making false statements, perjury, and subornation.

Officials convicted of those crimes and sentenced to at least a year in prison, for acts committed while serving in public office, would be denied federal retirement benefits. The legislation does allow for reconsideration of the pension loss for the official or his or her spouse, depending on circumstances.

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